

Climate change: Arctic Circle temperatures reached highest levels ever recorded last year, report finds

The average mean temperature over land areas in the Arctic was 2.1C above the 1981 average - making it the highest temperature recorded in 121 years. It comes as countries around the world see signs of climate change; from flooding in Germany, Belgium, and China; to wildfires in the US.

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Temperatures within the Arctic Circle reached the highest level ever recorded last year, according to an annual climate report by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A temperature of 38C (100.4F) was observed in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk in June 2020.

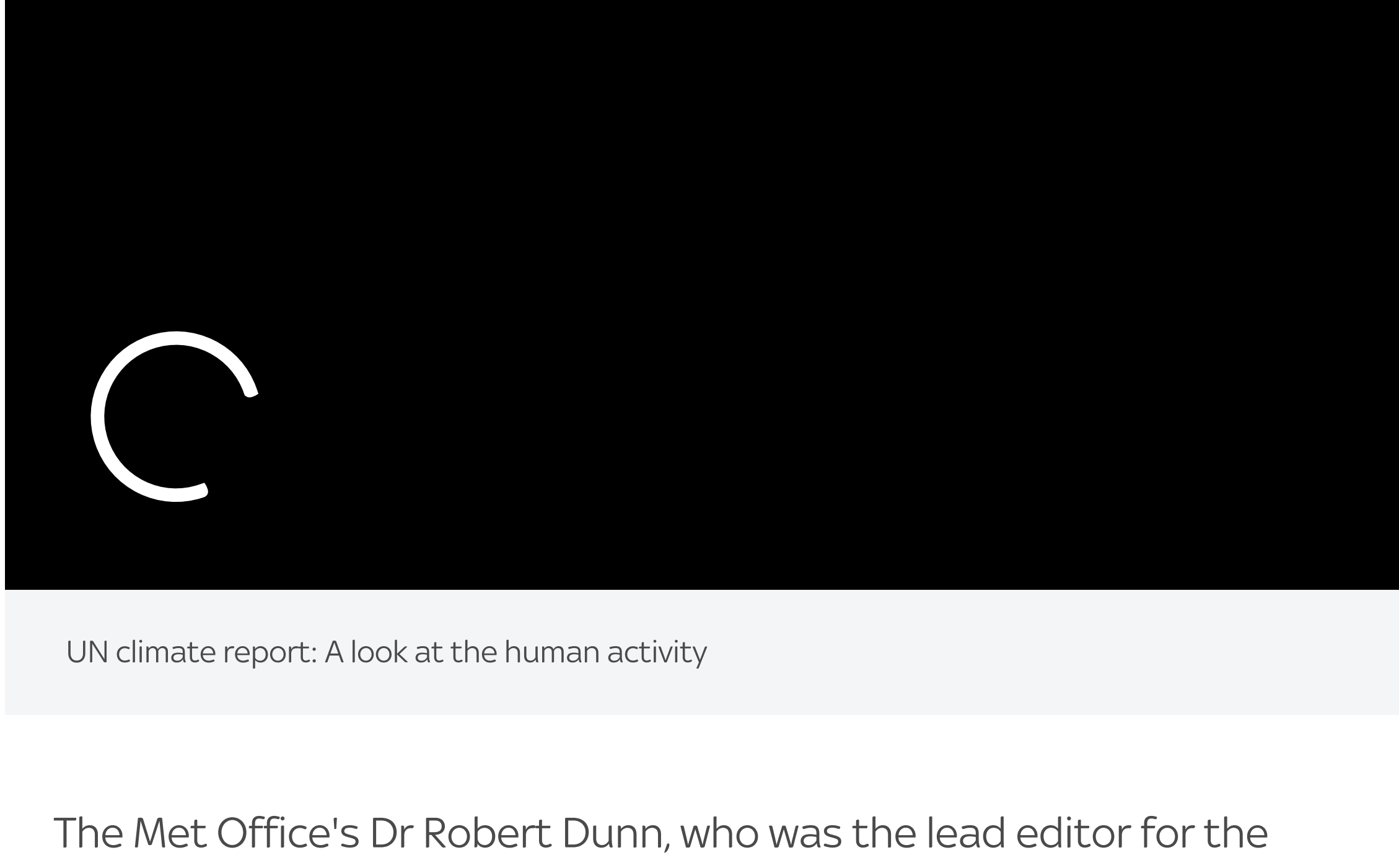
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[The NOAA report](#) found the annual mean temperature over land areas in the Arctic was 2.1C (35.8F) above the 1981 average - making it the highest temperature recorded in 121 years.



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The Met Office's Dr Robert Dunn, who was the lead editor for the global climate chapter of the report, said: "This report adds to all the other evidence that human-induced [climate change](#) is affecting every part of the globe, but not all regions are experiencing the change at the same rate.

"The Arctic is continuing to warm at a faster pace than lower latitudes, but Europe's annual average temperature is also increasing quite rapidly, with the five highest annual temperatures all occurring from 2014."

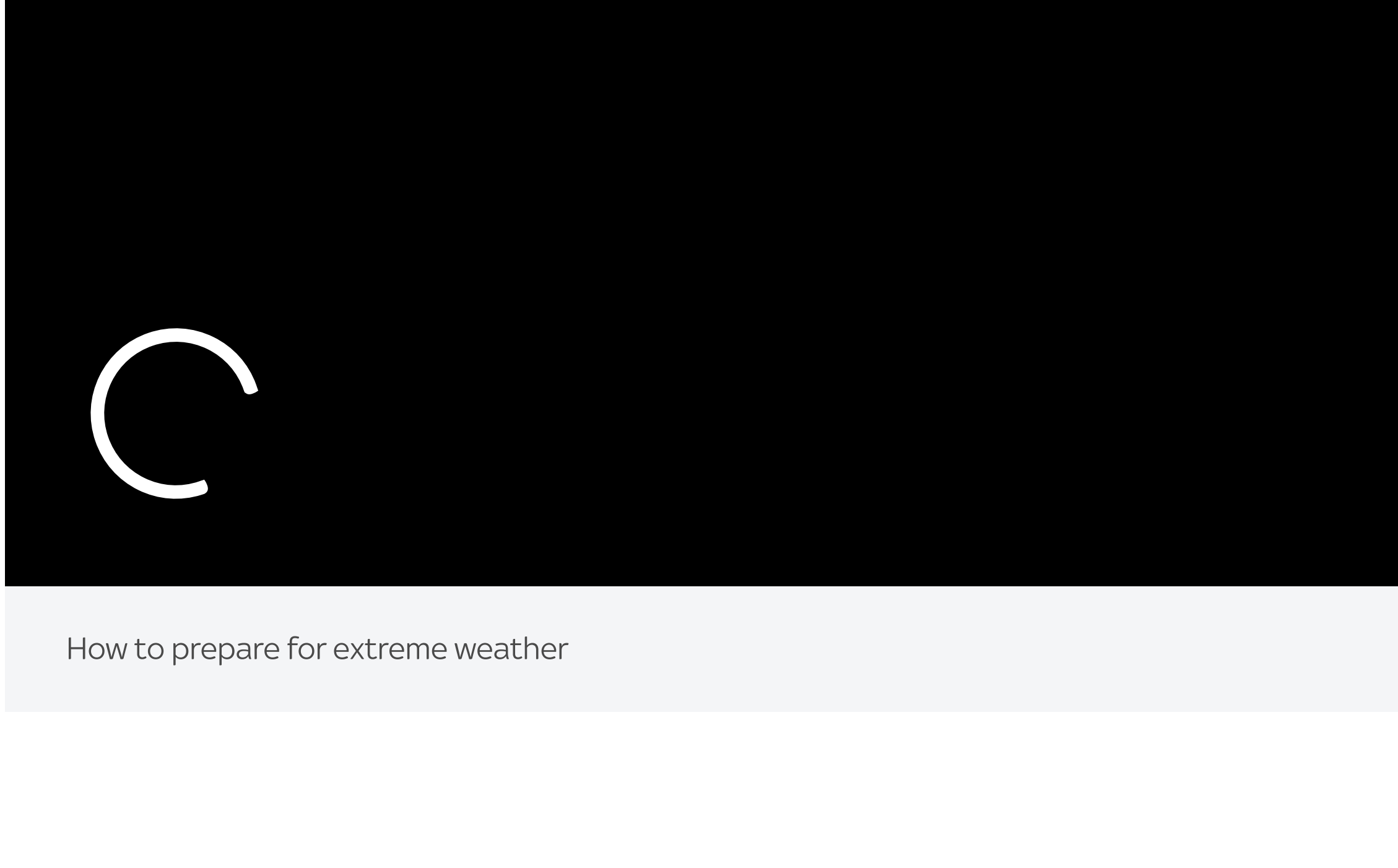
The 31st annual State of the Climate report also confirmed 2020 was among the three warmest years in recorded history, with Europe in particular 1.9C (35.4F) above the long-term average of 1981-2010. This year has seen the continent's [second-hottest July ever](#).

The UK reached its third-highest annual average temperature in 2020, after 2014 and 2006, while [this summer is on course to be one of the hottest on record](#).

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The report warned that despite a 6 to 7% fall in carbon dioxide emissions due to [COVID](#) lockdowns, carbon dioxide emission levels reached their highest concentrations at the planet's surface in at least the last 800,000 years.

"This is a stark reminder that factors leading to a changing climate are determined by time horizons far longer than a single year and have an inertia that will take a significant effort over a much longer period to halt, much less reverse," the authors said.



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